



Children & Family News

November 2005

N.D. Dept. of Human Services' Children & Family Services Division Update

Adoption Celebration is November 2

Gov. John Hoeven and First Lady Mickey Hoeven are planning to join N.D. Department of Human Services officials, adoption advocates, and children and families to celebrate National Adoption Month on November 2, from 3:30 to 5 p.m., in the Capitol's Brynhild Haugland Room.

"This is an opportunity to celebrate the generosity of our adoptive and foster families," Gov. Hoeven said.

Doors will open at 3:30 p.m. and refreshments will be available along with activities and crafts for children. Awards will be presented to several families and individuals. Awards include the *2005 Special Needs Adoptive Family of the Year Award*, the *Adoption Triad Award*, which celebrates individuals involved in an open adoption; *Adoption Advocate Award*; the *Multi-cultural Family Award*; and the *Adopted Youth Excellence Award*. A representative from Senator Byron Dorgan's office will present the *2005 Angel in Adoption Award* on behalf of the Congressional Coalition on Adoption Institute.

The award presentation will be followed by a "calling out" segment recognizing North Dakota children now in foster care who are ready for adoption but who do not have identified adoptive families.

In 2004, 344 children were adopted in North Dakota. Of these children, 95 involved children who had been in foster care prior to their adoptions. Twenty involved adoptions of foreign-born children, and 48 involved healthy infants. One hundred eighty-one involved adoptions by stepparents.

Many children in foster care have special placement needs because they have disabilities, are part of sibling groups being placed together, are older than age seven, or are of an ethnic minority.

For adoption information, visit www.nd.gov/humanservices/services/childfamily/adoption/.

Meth Impacts Foster Care

September 14, 2005 Survey Results

- As of August 16, 2005, there were 1,316 children in out-of-home placement (court ordered custody) in North Dakota.
- DHS surveyed the custodians (Division of Juvenile Services and county cases) for 1,098 of these children and achieved an 88.8% (975) response rate. Methamphetamine use, manufacturing, or selling factored in almost 24 percent of the child removals (231 children).
- The number of children in care due to meth was double the number in care when DHS did a similar survey in 2003 and found 117 children in care due to meth-related issues. In the 2003 survey, 15 percent of the child removals were related to meth.
- 2005 survey respondents indicated that it is likely that about half (121) of the 231 children would not be "in care" if meth had not been a factor.

Supreme Court and DHS staff attend conference

In September, Children and Family Services Division Director Paul Ronningen, and Court Improvement Specialist Tara Muhlhauser joined North Dakota Chief Justice Gerald W. VandeWalle, Northeast Judicial District Judge Lee Christofferson along with other court system staff members at a national conference in Minneapolis titled: "Justice For Children: Changing Lives by Changing Systems." The conference provided information and challenged participants to continue to build

Over→

Conference continued

collaboration between court systems and child welfare systems in order to better protect children. Chief Justices from across the country were invited to attend along with court and child welfare professionals.

Muhlhauser is North Dakota's first Court Improvement Specialist. She joined the department in July in a new position that is part of a partnership with the North Dakota Supreme Court. She is responsible for overseeing the Court Improvement Project and provides leadership and training and serves as a resource for the courts for child welfare matters involving the Adoption Safe Families Act and the Indian Child Welfare Act.

Muhlhauser works with the Supreme Court, the department, county social services, and Tribes in North Dakota to address child welfare issues and to coordinate solutions.

N.D. Department of Human Services Children & Family Services Division

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N.D. invited to share CFSR review information

North Dakota and Oregon were invited by the Children's Bureau of the federal Administration for Children and Families to participate in a national tele-conference on the Child and Family Services Reviews (CFSR's).

Jerry Milner, a policy specialist for the federal agency, extended the invitation. He asked the Children and Family Services Division of the N.D. Department of Human Services to share information with other states about North Dakota's successful internal child and family services review process. State and county staff in North Dakota regularly conduct reviews in each administrative region that are modeled after the federal performance review process. Outcomes have improved steadily, and N.D. is prepared to meet the stringent federal review standards during the next formal federal review in 2007.

Paul Ronningen and Don Snyder shared their expertise with peers during the mid-October conference call.

N.D. Child Welfare Data Trends: 2000 - 2004

Placement Type	FFY 2000	FFY 2001	FFY 2002	FFY 2003	FFY 2004	% (2004)	Percent Change from 2000-2004
Missing Placement*	9	37	18	34	28	1.27%	
Pre-Adoptive Home	154	166	157	160	207	9.39%	34% increase
Relative Placement	237	240	276	328	383	17.37%	62% increase
Family Foster Care	875	835	824	932	912	41.36%	4% increase
Group Home	125	109	127	125	120	5.44%	Minimal change
Facility (RTC & RCCF)	577	540	619	604	555	25.17%	3.8% decrease
Run-Away	1	2	0	0	0	0.00%	
Total**	1978	1929	2021	2183	2205	100.00%	11% increase ***
Total family placements****	1266					1502	19% increase ****
Children aging out of foster care					60		

SOURCE: Annual AFCARS files submitted to the Administration for Children and Families.

*Indicates that the placement information was missing from system when file was submitted, NOT that the child was "missing".

**Unduplicated count of children in the North Dakota foster care system, by Federal Fiscal Year (FFY).

***This increase occurred at a time when population data shows about a 23,000 decline in child population from 2000-2004. (U.S. Census Bureau Population estimates).

****Includes all family home settings – pre-adoptive, family home, and relative placements.